

Message Text

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43

ACTION AGR-20

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, ECON, NI

SUBJECT: EXCELLENT FOOD CROP PREDICTED FOR NORTHERN NIGERIA

DEPT PASS AGRICULTURE AND AID

1. SUMMARY: ALL INDICATIONS ARE THAT THOSE AREAS OF NORTHERN NIGERIA WHICH LAST YEAR WERE SERIOUSLY HIT BY DROUGHT WILL PRODUCE A BUMPER HARVEST OF FOOD CROPS THIS YEAR. RAINS MUST CONTINUE THROUGH END OF SEPTEMBER TO BRING PREDICTIONS TO FRUITION BUT THIS FAR RAINS HAVE BEEN EXCELLENT IN QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION. IN SOME AREAS MILLET CROP IS ALREADY BEING HARVESTED TAKING CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE OFF OF RELIEF EFFORTS. OUTLOOK FOR GROUNDNUTS (PEANUTS) IS NOT AS GOOD BUT VASTLY IMPROVED OVER LAST YEARS DISMAL PERFORMANCE. END SUMMARY.

2. MATERIAL REPORTED HERE IS DERIVED FROM DISCUSSIONS WITH STATE AGRICULTURE OFFICIALS, RESIDENTS OF DROUGHT AREAS, AND VISITORS TO THOSE AREAS AND FROM OBSERVATIONS BY CONSOFF DURING VISITS OVER PAST TWO WEEKS TO ALL FOUR OF THE NORTHERN STATES MOST AFFECTED BY LAST YEAR'S DROUGHT.

3. AFTER SEVERAL HARD YEARS AND A DISASTROUS ONE LAST YEAR, ALLAH HAS TRULY BEEN KIND TO NORTHERN FARMERS THIS RAINY SEASON. ALMOST WITHOUT EXCEPTION AREAS WHICH SUFFERED LAST YEAR HAVE

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RECEIVED EXCELLENT RAINFALL THIS YEAR. FOLLOWING STATISTICS

GIVE SOME INDICATION OF RAINFALL:

	MM OF RAINFALL			
	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
KANO	NA	42.4	261.5	197.8
SOKOTO	17.3	31.3	120.6	NA
BIRNIN-KEBBI (NWS)	70.3	NA	341.6	NA
GUSAU (NWS)	25.4	116.1	154.9	NA

RAINS HAVE CONTINUED INTO SEPTEMBER. LAST YEAR IN MANY AREAS OF THE NORTH THERE WAS NO RAIN WHATSOEVER AFTER THE END OF AUGUST. RAINS MUST CONTINUE THROUGH THE END OF THIS MONTH TO PRODUCE AN EXCELLENT CROP BUT STATE AGRICULTURAL OFFICIALS ARE VERY OPTIMISTIC.

4. THERE HAS BEEN A SIGNIFICANT SHIFT AWAY FROM GUINEA CORN (SORGHUM) TO FAST MATURING MILLET. AS A RESULT THE HARVEST IS ALREADY UNDERWAY IN THOSE AREAS WHICH RECEIVED THE EARLIEST RAINS AND SUBSTANTIAL QUANTITIES OF MILLET ARE ALREADY AVAILABLE IN VILLAGE MARKETS. NES OFFICIALS REPORT THAT RELIEF SUPPLIES HAVE ACTUALLY BEEN RETURNED FROM SOME AREAS. RELIEF EFFORTS HAVE BEEN REASONABLY EFFECTIVE. THIS CONCLUSION SUPPORTED BY ABILITY OF SMALL FARMERS TO RETURN TO HARDEST HIT AREAS AND CULTIVATE THE LAND WHILE LIVING OFF OF STATE PROVIDED RELIEF SUPPLIES. FLOODING HAS CAUSED SOME PROBLEMS FOR TRANSPORT OF RELIEF SUPPLIES AND IN SOME AREAS RESIDENTS WHO HAD MIGRATED TO ESCAPE THE DROUGHT RETURNED TO THEIR HOME AREAS TOO LATE TO PLANT WITH THE EARLY RAINS. HOWEVER, THESE PROBLEMS ARE CLEARLY THE EXCEPTION AND NOT THE RULE. LARGE NUMBERS OF NIGERIAN FARMERS WHO HAD MIGRATED INTO NIGERIA HAVE RETURNED TO NIGER TO PLANT BUT MANY HERDERS REMAIN BEHIND. IT APPEARS THAT THEY ARE RECEIVING RELIEF SUPPLIES ON SAME BASIS AS NIGERIANS. STATE OFFICIALS UNWILLING TO EVEN VENTURE A GUESS AS TO WHAT PERCENTAGE OF RELIEF RECIPIENTS ARE NORMAL RESIDENTS OF NIGER, CHAD OR OTHER SAHEL COUNTRIES BUT IT IS OBVIOUS THAT NIGERIAN RELIEF EFFORTS HERE HAVE TAKEN CONSIDERABLE BURDEN OFF OF THOSE COUNTRIES. STATE OFFICIALS FORESEE SOME NEED FOR CONTINUED RELIEF EFFORTS DURING 1975 RAINY SEASON BUT ON VERY LIMITED SCALE IN ISOLATED POCKETS.

5. OUTLOOK FOR GROUNDNUTS, AREAS LEADING CASH CROP, IS MUCH LESS OPTIMISTIC, THOUGH VASTLY IMPROVED OVER LAST YEAR. THIS CAN BE UNCLASSIFIED

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ATTRIBUTED IN PART TO SHORTAGE OF SEED BUT PRIMARY CAUSE APPEARS TO BE HEAVY EMPHASIS BY FARMERS ON PRODUCING FOOD CROPS. AFTER LAST YEAR'S PERFORMANCE FARMERS ARE MAKING EFFORT TO SEE THAT THEIR FAMILIES HAVE ENOUGH TO EAT. AS A RESULT GROUNDNUTS WERE LEFT FOR LATER PLANTING OR NEVER PLANTED AT ALL. PLANTING OF FOOD CROPS WAS ALSO STIMULATED BY THE EXCELLENT PRICES BEING PAID FOR THEM IN LOCAL MARKETS. NES COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE PREDICTS HIS STATE WILL PRODUCE ABOUT ONE THIRD AS MANY GROUNDNUTS AS IN

1969. THAT WAS NES'S BEST YEAR WHEN ABOUT 200,000 TONS WERE
MARKETED. WHILE NOT OUTSTANDING THAT QUANTITY ALONE WOULD
EXCEED THE TOTAL QUANTITY MARKETED IN THE ENTIRE NORTH IN
1973 (ABOUT 40,000 TONS). NONETHELESS IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE
COMING YEAR WILL STILL SEE CONSIDERABLE EXCESS OIL MILL CAPACITY
IN THE NORTH.
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